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THE CURRENT DEBATE OVER SOVIET DEFENSE POLICY

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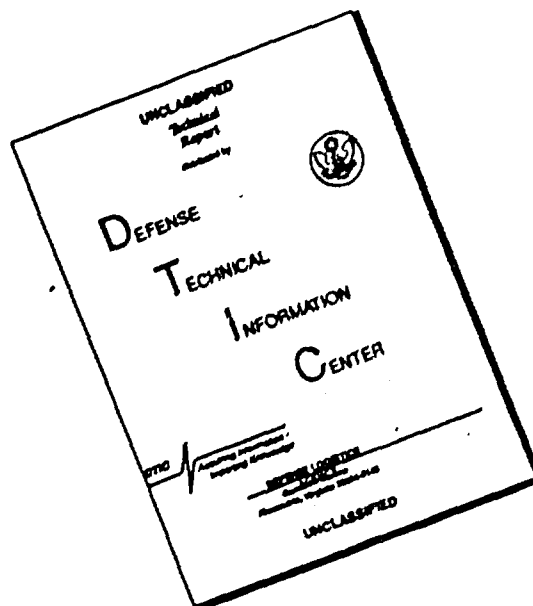
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## I. INTRODUCTION

The dramatic and startling changes that Mikhail Gorbachev has brought to the content and conduct of Soviet foreign policy in the form of new political thinking hold profound implications for the Western world. As a result of new political thinking, Soviet international behavior is being modified to such an extent that G.A. Arbatov, director of the influential Institute of the USA and Canada, remarked that "we are going to do something terrible to you [the United States]--we are going to deprive you of an enemy."<sup>1</sup> Suddenly, Soviet officials are launching a slick diplomatic offensive that many feel augurs a new era in Soviet international behavior.

New political thinking profoundly influences not only Soviet foreign policy, but also Soviet national security policy. The intense debate over Soviet national security policy that is currently taking place in the Soviet Union could result in profound changes not only in Soviet military doctrine and operational concepts, but also in the very structure of the Soviet Armed Forces. The unprecedented flexibility that the Soviets have brought to arms control negotiations and their willingness to offer major concessions, especially on the issue of verification, are indicative of Gorbachev's new political thinking on foreign policy and security issues.

New political thinking and the changes that it has brought about in Soviet behavior, both international and domestic, have triggered intense debate among Western analysts and policymakers over their underlying rationale. One school of thought generally views the changes being implemented by Gorbachev as an attempt to realign Soviet behavior with the realities of the present-day world. While there is a wide range of thought within this school, its proponents generally see as the driving force behind new political thinking an honest reappraisal of the concepts and policies underlying Soviet foreign policy. These analysts

<sup>1</sup>G.A. Arbatov, as quoted in "No More Mr. Tough Guy?," *Time*, May 23, 1988, p. 26.

feel that new political thinking offers the West an unprecedented opportunity to address with the Soviet Union many of the most pressing issues in international relations, including arms control and the arms race, human rights, and environmental issues. They recognize, however, that while new political thinking has dramatically altered the content and conduct of Soviet foreign policy, it has not in any way altered the traditional set of Soviet foreign policy goals. These goals include the continued security of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, the maintenance of the Soviet Union's superpower status, and an increase in Soviet political and ideological influence throughout the world.

The other school of thought is more skeptical about new political thinking. Its proponents view new political thinking and the changes it has brought as merely temporary measures instituted by the Soviet leadership in order to gain a breathing space during which they can address the most serious problem currently facing the Soviet Union--the state of the economy. These analysts fear that once its economy is back on track, the USSR will revert to its old ways. At that point, the Soviet Union would present the West with a far more serious threat than ever before. First, it no longer be constrained by an unwieldy economy. Second, the West would have been lulled into a false sense of security by the rhetoric of new political thinking. And finally, the Soviet Union would have used the breathing space in the arms race to develop a new generation of high-technology weapons that would pose a serious threat to the United States and its allies.

The present paper views Gorbachev's new political thinking as a genuine attempt by the Soviet leadership to modernize Soviet foreign and national security policy so that they will function more successfully in the present-day world. It interprets new political thinking as an acknowledgment by the Soviets that their old methods of conducting international relations were simply inadequate, and that they must dramatically change these methods in order to successfully achieve their traditional foreign policy goals.

This paper attempts to analyze Gorbachev's new political thinking on national security issues. It begins in Sec. II with a brief overview of new political thinking, including its goals, origins, and

the components that comprise it. Section III discusses the emerging role of Soviet civilian defense analysts in the formulation of Soviet defense policy. Section IV treats both the strategic nuclear and theater conventional dimensions of reasonable sufficiency. It also analyzes in depth the particularly contentious issues that civilian defense analysts and the professional military are currently debating. Section V concludes with some brief observations about the implications of new political thinking for the West.

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## II. GORBACHEV'S 'NEW POLITICAL THINKING'

### GOALS AND ORIGINS

Since coming to power in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev has launched a controversial and wide-ranging program of *perestroika* (restructuring) within the Soviet Union. In particular, Gorbachev has introduced dramatic changes into both the theory and the practice of Soviet foreign policy. In essence, his new political thinking is intended to infuse dynamism and flexibility into both the content and the conduct of Soviet foreign policy in order to bring it into alignment with the realities of the present-day world.

However, it is important not to confuse the changes in the content and conduct of Soviet foreign policy with a change in Soviet foreign policy goals. Basically, new political thinking is intended to modernize Soviet foreign policy so that it will function more successfully in the world of today. Gorbachev is essentially employing a new, more dynamic and flexible set of concepts, policies, and processes in order to achieve a not-so-new set of Soviet foreign policy goals, including the inviolability of the security of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the maintenance of the Soviet Union's status as a superpower, and the enhancement of the Soviet image--political, ideological, and economic--throughout the world.

Perhaps the most important imperative driving new political thinking is the economic one. As Gorbachev pointed out in late 1984, without intensive improvement in the economic sphere, the Soviet Union would not be in a position to enter the 21st century in the manner befitting a superpower.<sup>1</sup> The present crisis in the Soviet socioeconomic system has necessitated the adoption of a more cost-effective approach to Soviet foreign policy and security issues. Ye.M. Primakov, the head

<sup>1</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, report delivered at the Moscow All-Union Scientific and Practical Conference, *Pravda*, December 11, 1984. See also V.M. Zhurbin, S.A. Karaganov, and A.V. Kortunov, "On a Reasonable Sufficiency," *SSSR: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya* (hereafter abbreviated as *SSSR*), No. 12, December 1987.

of the prestigious Institute of World Economy and International Relations, underscored this fact when he noted the "need to optimize the correlation between productive spending and military spending..."<sup>2</sup> It is not surprising given Gorbachev's ideological pragmatism and the severity of the economic crisis in the Soviet Union that he has come to the conclusion that there is more to be gained in political terms from a build-down of military forces than there is to be gained by a continued military buildup.

Two security-related imperatives are also driving the new political thinking. As Steve Meyer has pointed out, first and foremost is Gorbachev's need to wrest control of the Soviet defense agenda away from the General Staff and to reestablish Party control of it.<sup>3</sup> If he is to succeed in implementing *perestroika*, Gorbachev must change the way that resources have traditionally been allocated in the Soviet Union. In order to do this he must regain control of the defense agenda, which in the past has heavily constrained economic change. Also, as the enormity of the economic crisis facing the Soviet Union becomes clear, it also becomes clear that the primacy that the Soviet military establishment has traditionally enjoyed in the resource allocation process will no longer be possible. As Gorbachev recently told a gathering in Moscow of intellectual, political, and scientific elite, the Soviet military will be forced to swallow the bitter pill of reductions in defense expenditure so that resources can be applied to the civilian sector of the economy.<sup>4</sup>

Second, Gorbachev's desire to arrive at a radically new approach to what he perceives to be the most important problem of the present day--the elimination of the danger of nuclear war--has prompted new thinking

<sup>2</sup>Ye.M. Primakov, "New Philosophy of Foreign Policy," *Pravda*, July 9, 1987.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen M. Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Fall 1988.

<sup>4</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, "To Build Up the Intellectual Potential of Restructuring," *Pravda*, January 7, 1989. See also Yu. S. Valkov, "The Last Trump Card," *Sotsialisticheskaya industriya*, November 13, 1988.

towards foreign policy and security issues, in particular in the area of arms control.<sup>5</sup> Soviet arms control proposals under Gorbachev have been characterized by innovation and a dramatic dynamism and flexibility that are indicative of Gorbachev's desire to substantially decrease the threat that the enormous stockpiles of nuclear weapons pose to all of mankind.

## SECURITY-RELATED COMPONENTS

Many of the tenets central to Gorbachev's new political thinking pertain especially to Soviet defense policy. Gorbachev has repeatedly emphasized the growing *interdependence* of the nations of the world. He has pointed out that the existence of huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons is the most important factor contributing to this interdependence, for it means that "whether we like each other or not, we will have to live or die together."<sup>6</sup> In addition, the revolution in science and technology and environmental problems have led to a greater global interdependence. A fundamental part of new political thinking is the realization that there is an increasing number of very important problems that transcend national boundaries and are common to the world community.

Another facet of the new political thinking that bears upon Soviet defense policy is *mutual security*. Gorbachev has repeatedly stated that "security is indivisible. It is either equal security for all or none at all."<sup>7</sup> It is no longer acceptable practice for the Soviet Union to pursue its own security interests at the expense of other nations. Rather, as numerous Soviet foreign policy and security specialists have emphasized, Soviet security must be coupled with the security of all members of the world community.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup>G.A. Trofimenko, "New Realities and a New Way of Thinking," *SShA*, No. 2, February 1987.

<sup>6</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, *Izbranyye rechi i statii* [Selected Speeches and Articles] (Moscow, 1985), p. 207.

<sup>7</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 412.

<sup>8</sup>Ye.M. Primakov, "New Philosophy of Foreign Policy;" V.V. Zhurkin, S.A. Karaganov, and A.V. Kortunov, "Old and New Challenges to Security," *Kommunist*, No. 1, January 1987; and V. Petrovskiy, "Security Through Disarmament," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya* (hereafter abbreviated as *MEIMO*), No. 1, January 1987.



As part of the new political thinking, Gorbachev has placed increasing emphasis on *political means*, rather than military means, to ensure a common security for the world community. These means include diplomacy and negotiation, especially arms control and confidence-building measures, economic policy, and humanitarian policies. Related to this is the realization that in the nuclear era, war can no longer be considered a rational continuation of politics. Gorbachev has said unequivocally that "nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals."<sup>9</sup>

The final tenet of the new political thinking that is particularly relevant to Soviet defense policy is *reasonable sufficiency*. Gorbachev first referred to this concept in late 1985, when he used the term *relative sufficiency* (*otnositel'naya dostatochnost*). In his speech to the 27th Party Congress in early 1986, Gorbachev changed the wording slightly to *reasonable sufficiency* (*razumnaya dostatochnost*), the term by which the concept has been known ever since. In that speech, Gorbachev stated that the Soviet Union "stands for ... restricting military potentials within the bounds of reasonable sufficiency...."<sup>10</sup>

Gorbachev has never fully defined the concept of reasonable sufficiency, preferring instead to encourage Soviet analysts--both military and civilian--to work together to fill in the details of his very vague concept. However, in a 1987 speech, Gorbachev elaborated somewhat on the concept of reasonable sufficiency, stating that reasonable sufficiency presupposes that the Soviet Armed Forces be structured so that "they would be sufficient to repulse a possible aggression but would not be sufficient for the conduct of offensive operations."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress* (Moscow, 1986), p. 85.

<sup>11</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, "The Reality and Guarantees of a Secure World," *Pravda*, September 17, 1987.

In addition, the concept of reasonable sufficiency is being used to justify the reallocation of resources from the military to the civilian sector of the economy, which is essential if *perestroika* is to succeed. The Soviet military is now being told that reasonable sufficiency means that it will have to do more with less. As Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, then Chief of the General Staff, acknowledged, "with regard to arms and equipment, this [reasonable sufficiency] means that the troops and fleets will probably receive less, but the combat effectiveness and quality must be higher, so that it is possible to resolve tasks with fewer combat resources, yet more effectively."<sup>12</sup>

The specific tenets of reasonable sufficiency will be discussed in greater detail in Sec. IV. It is important to note, however, that the concept of reasonable sufficiency is currently under much discussion in the Soviet Union, and that an official definition with set policy implications may not emerge for some time to come. Currently, an intense and wide-ranging debate is underway in the Soviet Union over reasonable sufficiency and Soviet security issues. In this debate, the professional military establishment, which has traditionally been virtually the only player in the process by which Soviet defense policy is formulated, is pitted against an emerging cadre of civilian defense analysts who are rapidly gaining influence in the defense policy formulation process.

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<sup>12</sup>S. F. Akhromeyev, report to the General Staff Party aktiv, *Krasnaya zvezda* (hereafter abbreviated as KZ), August 13, 1988.

### III. NEW POLITICAL THINKING AND SOVIET DEFENSE POLICY

Under Gorbachev, there has emerged a dramatically new method of formulating defense policy. Gorbachev has brought defense policy formulation out into the open by refraining from making definitive, detailed statements with set policy implications. Rather, as Marshall Shulman noted recently, Gorbachev has presented new political thinking on security issues as a vague, undefined concept, preferring instead to allow experts in the field to discuss it and fill in the specific details.<sup>1</sup> In this way, Gorbachev has encouraged participation by an emerging cadre of civilian defense analysts in the policy formulation process. He has also fostered an unprecedentedly open discussion among military and civilian defense analysts regarding new political thinking and Soviet security issues.

#### THE DEFENSE POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS

Traditionally, the responsibility for the formulation and implementation of Soviet defense policy has belonged exclusively to the Soviet General Staff. While the Politburo is responsible for arriving at final policy decisions regarding such issues as the size of the defense budget, the makeup of the armed forces, and the content of Soviet military doctrine, the General Staff has traditionally provided the Politburo with policy options upon which to base its final decisions.

However, under Gorbachev, the General Staff's virtual monopoly on setting the defense agenda is being challenged by a growing cadre of civilian defense analysts who are becoming increasingly influential in policy discussions. Not only are many of these civilian analysts very able, but some aspire to high-level policymaking positions. Gorbachev's announcement of unilateral troop reductions--a policy that many civilian defense analysts had strongly supported--is evidence of the increasing

<sup>1</sup>Marshall D. Shulman, "The Superpowers: Dance of the Dinosaurs," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 3, 1988.

influence of these analysts in the formulation of Soviet defense policy. But as Marshal Akhromeyev demonstrated with this abrupt resignation after Gorbachev's announcement of these troop cuts, the Soviet military establishment is not likely to accept this encroachment by civilian analysts into its domain without some kind of protest.

It appears that under Gorbachev, the foreign and defense policy formulation process has passed through two stages.<sup>2</sup> The first stage involved encouraging a new set of participants--civilian defense analysts--to take part in the policy formulation process. This stage appears to have extended from late 1984 through mid-1987. The second stage, which began in mid-1987, has been concerned with institutionalizing the role of civilian defense analysts in the policy formulation process.

### Stage I--New Participants

In an effort to develop a detailed architecture for new political thinking about foreign policy and security issues, Gorbachev has turned to civilian defense analysts (*institutchiki*) for innovative approaches to problems in these areas.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, he has dramatically revised the defense policy formulation process. During the first stage through which the policy formulation process passed, Gorbachev, leading party members, and academicians repeatedly encouraged the intelligentsia to enter into the debate with fresh, new ideas on foreign policy and security issues. Two experts even went so far as to call for the active collaboration of civilian defense analysts and military experts to

<sup>2</sup>Jeffrey Chockel, "Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and the Formation of Soviet Foreign Policy," *Radio Liberty Bulletin*, No. 529 86, September 25, 1988.

<sup>3</sup>As Steve Meyer has pointed out, in this sense, the growing prominence of civilian defense analyses is a consequence of the need to fill in with more specific ideas Gorbachev's general concept of new political thinking. (See Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," in *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 1988, pp. 1-14; and also, "The Gorbachev Revolution and a Warning to Soviet Foreign Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Winter 1987/1988, pp. 1-14.)

examine Soviet military doctrine and to develop and fill in the details of Gorbachev's concept of reasonable sufficiency.<sup>4</sup>

Two factors have prompted Gorbachev to encourage civilian defense analysts to enter into the debate over Soviet national security issues. First, as he has with other serious problems currently facing the Soviet Union, Gorbachev has recognized the need for truly new approaches to national security issues. In addition, he has encouraged these civilian defense analysts to work with the military to analyze Soviet military doctrine and security issues in an effort to reestablish control over the Soviet defense agenda. Without this, there is little chance that Gorbachev will be able to successfully restructure the economy.

The majority of these civilian defense analysts work at leading foreign affairs research institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences, in particular the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEIR), the Institute of the USA and Canada (IUSAC), and the newly created Institute of Western Europe. Because the Soviet military has traditionally restricted access to detailed information pertaining to Soviet national security, these analysts have acquired expertise on defense and security issues largely through the study of Western defense policies and arms control issues, particularly at the strategic nuclear level. In the past two years, however, *glasnost* has even affected Soviet defense and security issues, and civilian defense analysts are gradually obtaining greater access to Soviet national security information.

The group of civilians currently involved in the defense policy debate includes both the old guard--veteran civilian analysts and retired military officers--and a new generation of civilian analysts.

<sup>4</sup>A.A. Kokoshin, "Three Major Elements in Stability," *KZ*, September 16, 1988; and A.N. Yakovlev, "Social Sciences and the Attainment of a Qualitatively New State of Soviet Society," *Kommunist*, No. 8, May 1987. See also M.S. Gorbachev, "The Perfection of Developed Socialism and Ideological Work of the Party in Light of the Decision of the June 1983 CPSU Central Committee Plenum, *Zhivoye tvorchestvo naroda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1984); M.S. Gorbachev, "Progress in Implementing the Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the Tasks of Promoting Perestroika," *Pravda*, June 29, 1988; and A.F. Dobrynin, "For a Nuclear-Free World as the 21st Century Approaches," *Kommunist*, No. 9, 1986.

The old guard includes Ye.M. Primakov, director of IMEiMO; V.V. Zhurkin, formerly deputy director of IUSAC and now director of the Institute of Western Europe; A.A. Vasil'yev, head of the disarmament affairs section at IUSAC; Lieutenant General (Ret.) M.A. Mil'shteyn; Major General (Ret.) V.I. Makarevskiy, staff member at IMEiMO; and Major General V.V. Larionov, professor at the General Staff Academy. Key members of the younger generation are A.A. Kokoshin, deputy director of IUSAC; A.G. Arbatov, head of the disarmament and security department at IMEiMO; A.V. Kortunov, head of the international security studies section at IUSAC; S.A. Karaganov, a deputy director of the Institute of Western Europe; and I.Ye. Malashenko, who is at IUSAC.

In addition to encouraging the entry of academics and civilian defense analysts into the security debate, Gorbachev has overseen the reorganization of several key organizations with responsibility for foreign policy and security issues. For example, new arms control divisions have been established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the International Department of the Central Committee. Both the Institute for World Economy and International Relations and the Institute of the USA and Canada have created departments for the study of arms control and international security issues. And finally, two military officers with extensive experience in security issues have been transferred to the Central Committee apparatus--Major General V. Starobinoy is the head of the new arms control section in the International Department, and Major General G. Batenin is a consultant to the Central Committee.<sup>5</sup>

## Stage II--Refining the Process

During the second stage, Gorbachev seems to be concentrating on institutionalizing, to the extent possible, the new role that these civilian defense analysts are playing, and on making the policy formulation process less cumbersome. He has initiated several steps designed to coordinate and to better integrate the policy recommendations and analysis of these new participants into the policy

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, "Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and the Formation of a New Group Policy."

formulation process. Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a "Scientific Coordination Center" has been established to coordinate academic research on arms control and security issues and to integrate this research into the policy formulation process.<sup>6</sup> In addition, various governmental ministries have begun to sponsor conferences on foreign policy and security issues that are intended to bring together military, academic, and Party officials, along with scientists and journalists.<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sponsored such a conference in July 1986, which brought together military leaders, scientists, journalists, and diplomats. As G.A. Arbatov, the director of IUSAC, noted, this conference was an "unprecedented event in the development of *glasnost* in foreign policy ... an important milestone in the awakening of foreign policy thought and the development of debates on important foreign policy issues."<sup>8</sup> Arbatov specifically called upon the Ministry of Defense to sponsor such a conference in the future.

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<sup>6</sup>F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military," *Foreign Affairs*, No. 5, Summer 1988.

<sup>7</sup>V. Serebryannikov, "In Step with the Realities of the Nuclear Age," *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil* (hereafter abbreviated as *KVS*), No. 3, February 1987.

<sup>8</sup>G.A. Arbatov, "Glasnost, Talks and Disarmament," *Pravda*, October 17, 1988.

#### IV. REASONABLE SUFFICIENCY

Soviet military experts and civilian defense analysts alike are striving to fill in the details of the very general concept of reasonable sufficiency that Gorbachev has presented. Questions that need to be answered include what level of forces constitutes sufficiency; what criteria should be used to determine the size of the Soviet Armed Forces; how the armed forces should be structured; what kinds of operations the Soviet Armed Forces should be capable of carrying out; whether the concept of reasonable sufficiency will require changes to Soviet military strategy; and what implications reasonable sufficiency has for traditional Soviet views on strategic stability.

There are two general dimensions to reasonable sufficiency--strategic nuclear and theater conventional. Discussion at the strategic nuclear level has revolved around such issues as what criteria should be used to determine strategic parity, what constitutes strategic stability, and mutual deterrence. Much of the discussion at this level is based upon Western literature on these issues written over the past quarter century.

The issues under discussion at the theater conventional level are inherently more complex than are strategic nuclear issues, and therefore will require a greater degree of original analysis on the part of Soviet analysts. In many respects, these issues will prove to be more difficult to resolve, in part due to the lack of experience of most civilian defense analysts in analyzing theater conventional issues. The central tasks at this level involve determining what criteria should be used to assign a force posture a predominately offensive or defensive character and then developing operational concepts and alternative force postures to support theater conventional operations.



## STRATEGIC NUCLEAR LEVEL

Both the professional military establishment and Soviet civilian analysts generally agree that reasonable sufficiency presupposes deep, mutual reductions in strategic nuclear forces to lower levels of parity. They are also in general agreement that both qualitative and quantitative factors must somehow be included in any calculation of strategic parity.

Much of the discussion of the strategic nuclear dimension of reasonable sufficiency has centered around the concept of strategic stability. In general, defense analysts describe strategic stability as involving three factors: mutual deterrence, mutual assured destruction, and adequate safeguards against the unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons.<sup>1</sup>

Soviet thinking about strategic stability is based directly upon the U.S. concept of mutual assured destruction (MAD), in which the side subject to aggression retains the potential to inflict unacceptable levels of damage upon the aggressor. Soviet civilian defense analysts define unacceptable damage in terms of former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's concept of mutual assured destruction, i.e., the destruction of 60-70 percent of industrial capacity and the loss of 30-40 percent of the population.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, these analysts have adopted McNamara's criterion of approximately 400 equivalent megatons as the amount of force that must survive a first strike if the defender is to be able to inflict unacceptable damage upon the aggressor. One group of analysts has noted that this surviving force could be configured as 400 one-megaton weapons that could be targeted against approximately 200 administrative and industrial centers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A.A. Kokoshin, "Nuclear Arms Reduction and Strategic Stability," *SSbA*, No. 2, February 1968; and Kokoshin, "Three Major Elements in Stability."

<sup>2</sup>See Yu.M. Izraelov on the "Glasnost" Program, Moscow Television Center, June 4, 1967; Izraelov, "New Philosophy on Foreign Policy;" A.I. Arbatov, Vasil'yev, and Kokoshin, "Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Stability," *SSbA*, Nos. 9 & 10, September & October 1967; and Kokoshin, "Nuclear Arms Reduction and Strategic Stability."

<sup>3</sup>A.I. Arbatov, Vasil'yev, and Kokoshin, "Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Stability."

Civilian defense analysts have studiously refrained from commenting on or elaborating upon Gorbachev's utopian vision of ridding the world of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. They have left it instead to Soviet political commentators to treat this issue. These commentators have consistently paid lip service to Gorbachev's utopian vision, generally noting it as the one of the driving factors behind the new political thinking on security issues.<sup>4</sup>

### THEATER CONVENTIONAL LEVEL

In general, reasonable sufficiency at the theater conventional level includes three main ideas: nonoffensive defense, asymmetrical responses to enemy actions, and flexible and dynamic arms control initiatives.

The concept of nonoffensive defense involves the reduction of military forces and conventional weapons to the level at which both sides are capable of defending themselves against enemy aggression, but are incapable of executing offensive operations against the other side. In fact, the Warsaw Pact has proposed that both the United States and the Soviet Union restructure the military forces of the NATO and the Warsaw Pact to a posture in which they are capable only of nonoffensive defense.<sup>5</sup>

At the theater conventional level, the concept of reasonable sufficiency has prompted the Soviets to put forth a number of innovative and flexible arms control initiatives. One analyst has stated that two criteria for the theater conventional dimension of reasonable sufficiency are the removal of "one-sided preferences"--asymmetrical force reductions to equal levels--and unilateral force reductions.<sup>6</sup> And the Warsaw Pact has publicly declared its readiness to address the issue

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<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Primakov, "New Philosophy of Foreign Policy;" Petrovskiy, "Security Through Disarmament;" and Trofimenko, "New Realities and a New Way of Thinking."

<sup>5</sup>"On the Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact Member States," *Pravda*, May 30, 1987.

<sup>6</sup>Interview with L.S. Semeyko, *XX vek i mir*, No. 12, December 1987.

<sup>7</sup>"Communique of the Conference of the Warsaw Pact States' Political Consultative Committee," *Pravda*, May 30, 1987.

of inequalities in the force levels of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the Soviets have proposed the creation of a nuclear-free zone extending 150 km on either side of the inner-German border.

Both civilian analysts and military spokesmen have begun to discuss the criteria for reasonable sufficiency at the theater conventional level. However, they have not yet succeeded in developing the kind of analytic framework that they have formulated at the strategic nuclear level in their discussions of strategic stability. Thus far, there have been no detailed descriptions of what a military force postured for nonoffensive defense would comprise. It is likely that the discussion will move ahead in this area as civilian defense analysts acquire expertise in theater-level military operations, an area in which until now only the Soviet military establishment has had expertise.

## CONTENTIOUS ISSUES

There are a number of very contentious issues currently being debated by civilian defense analysts and the professional military establishment.<sup>8</sup> The fact that the two groups do not use the same term to refer to the concept of sufficiency is indicative of the depth of their disagreements. Civilian defense analysts use Gorbachev's term *reasonable sufficiency*, while the professional military refer to *defensive sufficiency*. In addition, there is disagreement among members of these two groups over several issues.

While it is too early to predict whether the civilians or the military will come to exert the greater influence on the direction of Soviet national security policy, initial indications are that the civilian defense analysts pose a very serious challenge to the virtually exclusive control that the Soviet military has exercised over defense policy formulation. It is significant to note that Gorbachev's decision to unilaterally reduce the size of the Soviet Armed Forces was consonant with civilian defense analysts' writings (although the decision may in

<sup>8</sup>See R. Hyland Phillips and Jeffrey I. Sands, "Reasonable Sufficiency and Soviet Conventional Defense," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Fall 1988, pp. 164-178 for a detailed statistical analysis of the civil-military divergence over reasonable sufficiency.

fict not have been based on this advice), and was certainly not in keeping with the advice of the Soviet military establishment.

### Quality versus Quantity

**The Civilians.** Civilian defense analysts argue that it is necessary to evaluate military parity based on qualitative, not just quantitative, criteria. Ye.M. Primakov, the director of IMEIMO, has argued that under the condition of reasonable sufficiency, "despite the importance of the quantitative aspect of strategic parity, its qualitative aspect is of paramount importance--the inability of either side to avoid a crushing counterstrike."<sup>9</sup> These analysts maintain that the Soviet Union needs only to ensure qualitative, not quantitative, parity with the United States. This they define as the ability to inflict "unacceptable damage" in response to a nuclear first strike.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, civilian defense analysts are challenging the traditional concept that strategic parity is stabilizing. A.A. Kokoshin, a deputy director of IUSAC, has stated unequivocally that "parity is not synonymous with strategic stability. Even if parity is maintained, strategic stability may diminish--the equilibrium of military might becomes less and less stable as sides move to high levels of confrontation."<sup>11</sup> V.V. Zhurkin, the director of the Institute of Western Europe, echoed this idea when he wrote that "the concept of balance and parity ... and the concept of stability ... have begun to diverge."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Primakov, "New Philosophy of Foreign Policy." See also A.G. Arbatov, A.A. Vasil'yev, and A.A. Kokoshin, "Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Stability;" and Kokoshin, "Three Major Elements in Stability."

<sup>10</sup>I.Ye. Malashenko, "Parity Reassessed," *New Times* (Moscow), No. 47.87, November 30, 1987.

<sup>11</sup>Kokoshin, "Three Major Elements in Stability." See also Primakov, "New Philosophy of Foreign Policy;" Primakov on the "Studio 9" Program, June 4, 1987; and Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov, "On a Reasonable Sufficiency."

<sup>12</sup>Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov, "Old and New Challenges to Security."

Instead, strategic stability is maintained by the "presence of guaranteed potential on both sides for an adequate retaliatory strike."<sup>13</sup> As mentioned earlier, Soviet civilian defense analysts have based their concept of strategic stability directly on the U.S. concept of mutual assured destruction and have adopted former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's standard for first strike stability.

Some civilian defense analysts have also promoted the notion that Soviet security does not depend on making a symmetrical response to every move made by the enemy. Indeed, they claim that one of the principles of reasonable sufficiency is that "an asymmetrical response to provocative actions of the other side is preferable to a symmetrical one."<sup>14</sup> While a symmetrical response may seem be the most "natural" way to restore military parity, it has several significant disadvantages. First, copying the enemy's weapons systems frequently causes one to lag behind in the arms race. These analysts feel that the United States encourages the arms race with the Soviet Union in hopes that the Soviet Union will bankrupt its economy by continuously striving to match the U.S. weapons system for weapons system. Indeed, they feel that symmetrical responses to the enemy's weapons developments compels the one to compete on the opponent's field and according to the opponent's rules of the game.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Arbatov, Vasil'yev, and Kokoshin, "Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Stability."

<sup>14</sup>Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov, "On a Reasonable Sufficiency." See also I.Ye. Malashenko, "Reasonable Sufficiency and Illusory Superiority," *New Times* (Moscow), No. 24.87, June 22, 1987; I.Ye. Malashenko, "Political and Psychological Aspects of U.S. Nuclear Strategy," *SShA*, No. 12, December 1987; V.V. Zhurkin, S.A. Karaganov, and A.V. Kortunov, "Reasonable Sufficiency--or How to Break the Vicious Circle," *New Times* (Moscow), No. 40.87, October 12, 1987; and interview with Semoyko in *XX vek i mir*.

<sup>15</sup>Zhurkin, Kortunov, and Karaganov, "Reasonable Sufficiency--or How to Break the Vicious Circle;" and Primakov on the "Studio 9" Program, June 4, 1987.

**The Military.** Military experts have strongly disagreed with the arguments put forth by civilian defense intellectuals, denying especially the primacy of qualitative over quantitative criteria in determining parity and the wisdom of asymmetrical responses to provocative enemy actions.

Soviet Minister of Defense D.T. Yazov has defended military-strategic parity as "the decisive factor in preventing a war" and has defined this as "the approximately equal correlation of the two alliances' military forces...."<sup>16</sup> General D.A. Volkogonov has supported this idea, stating that the existence of strategic parity deters enemy aggression, and is therefore a stabilizing factor.<sup>17</sup> However, other military officers have disagreed with this formulation. For example, Colonel P. Skorodenko has written that "despite the important role of strategic military parity ... it far from ensures reliable guarantees of equal and universal security."<sup>18</sup>

Marshal Yazov has appeared to defend the traditional military view that the Soviet Armed Forces must continue to grow in symmetrical response to the growth of an adversary's military capabilities. First Deputy Minister of Defense P.G. Lushev has discounted the possibility of adopting an asymmetrical force posture, arguing the Soviet Armed Forces must "master all the forms and techniques of armed struggle that the enemy may use."<sup>19</sup>

However, Marshal Akhromeyev was more equivocal about this matter, stating that parity does not require that the two sides' force structures be identical and that it "should be a question of approximate balance, in which the advantages of one side in certain indicators of

<sup>16</sup>D.T. Yazov, "The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact is the Doctrine of the Defense of Peace and Socialism," *Pravda*, July 27, 1987.

<sup>17</sup>D.A. Volkogonov, "Imperatives of the Nuclear Age," *KZ*, May 22, 1987.

<sup>18</sup>P. Skorodenko, "Military Parity and the Principle of Reasonable Sufficiency," *KVS*, No. 10, May 1987. See also M. Yasyukov, *APN Military Bulletin* (Moscow), No. 6, March 1986.

<sup>19</sup>P.G. Lushev, *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 9, 1987.

combat power would be balanced by certain advantages of the other side in other indicators."<sup>20</sup>

### Unilateral versus Bilateral Force Reductions

**The Civilians.** Many civilian defense analysts maintain that since qualitative criteria are the most important determinants of strategic parity, the Soviet Union could reduce its force levels unilaterally and still maintain strategic stability with the West.<sup>21</sup> L.S. Semeyko, a senior researcher at IUSAC, recently stated that the concept of reasonable sufficiency encompasses both asymmetrical and unilateral force reductions.<sup>22</sup> And the trio of V.V. Zhurkin, S.A. Karaganov, and A.V. Kortunov have written that unilateral measures in the area of arms control and force reductions are an important element of reasonable sufficiency.<sup>23</sup>

**The Military.** Not surprisingly, the professional military have reacted strongly to suggestions in favor of Soviet force reductions, especially unilateral reductions. In a recent article, Commander in Chief of Air Defense Forces I.M. Tret'yak warned the Soviet military against "being lured by the apparent benefits" of force reductions. He referred to the unilateral reduction of Soviet troops in the 1950s as a "sorry experience" and a rash step that dealt a serious blow to the Soviet military.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, there is speculation that in light of Gorbachev's announcement in December 1988 of unilateral Soviet troop reductions, General Tret'yak's harsh statements against such cuts may have resulted in his forced resignation.

<sup>20</sup>S.F. Akhromeyev, "The Doctrine of Preventing War, Defending Peace and Socialism," *Problemy mira i sotsializma*, No. 12, December 1987.

<sup>21</sup>A.A. Kokoshin and A.V. Kortunov, "Stability and Changes in International Relations," *SShA*, No. 7, July 1987. They state that "at any level of military confrontation, one side can afford to display unilateral restraint in the stockpiling of arms and still have enough weapons to repulse a possible threat ... or to deliver an effective retaliatory strike...."

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Semeyko in *NY tek i mir*.

<sup>23</sup>Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov, "On a Reasonable Sufficiency."

<sup>24</sup>Interview with I.M. Tret'yak, *Moscow News* (Moscow), No. 8, February 21, 1988.

Deputy Chief of the General Staff M.A. Gareyev came out forcefully against the effects of *glasnost* in the debate over Soviet defense policy, declaring that "it is intolerable when individual articles published in our press express judgments concerning unilateral disarmament. The necessity for defense of the Motherland and the military profession is put into doubt."<sup>25</sup>

Instead, the professional military establishment ties the Soviet force posture directly to the U.S. force posture, declaring that the limits of defense sufficiency are determined by the United States.<sup>26</sup> Marshal Akhromeyev echoed this idea when he wrote that "defense sufficiency cannot be interpreted one-sidedly, without regard to the developing correlation of forces. It would be even more of a mistake to understand it as unilateral disarmament, a unilateral lessening of our defense efforts."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the depth of Marshal Akhromeyev's opposition to unilateral troop reductions became apparent when he "retired" from his position of Chief of the General Staff, reportedly in protest over Gorbachev's December 7 announcement. In addition, it has been rumored that Soviet Minister of Defense Yazov threatened to resign in protest against Gorbachev's announcement. There are also rumors that Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Pact, Marshal V.G. Kulikov, may soon resign over this issue.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup>M.A. Gareyev, "Great October and Defense of the Motherland," *Oktyabr*, No. 2, February, 1988.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with A.I. Gribkov, "Doctrine of Maintaining Peace," *KZ*, September 29, 1987; Yazov, "The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact is the Doctrine of the Defense of Peace and Socialism;" and Yasyukov, *APN Military Bulletin*.

<sup>27</sup>Akhromeyev, "The Doctrine of Preventing War, Defending Peace and Socialism." See also G. Kostev, "Our Military Doctrine in Light of New Political Thinking," *KVS*, No. 17, September 1987; Skorodenko, "Military Parity and the Principle of Reasonable Sufficiency;" and V. Serebryannikov, "National Security in the Nuclear Age," *KVS*, No. 9, May 1988.

<sup>28</sup>M. Hauner, A. Kahr, "Why Did Akhromeyev Resign?," *Radio Liberty Bulletin*, December 8, 1988.



## Defense versus Offense

**The Civilians.** Since Gorbachev's affirmation in 1987 that both Soviet and Warsaw Pact military doctrines have strictly defensive goals, Soviet civilian defense analysts have maintained that reasonable sufficiency presupposes nonoffensive defense. The concept of nonoffensive defense presupposes that military forces are configured around "a purely defensive option on a strategic and operational scale, without the material potential for conducting offensive or counteroffensive operations."<sup>29</sup> Civilian defense analysts maintain that the idea of nonoffensive defense "corresponds most to the idea of strengthening strategic stability and reducing the sides' military potentials to a level of sufficiency dictated only by the need for defense...."<sup>30</sup>

The discussion of nonoffensive defense has centered around a reassessment of the Battle of Kursk in World War II. The authors of this reassessment, A.A. Kokoshin and V.V. Larionov, argue that the Battle of Kursk demonstrated not only that defense is more economical than offense, but also that it enables the defender to obtain important advantages over the aggressor. Thus, the battle of Kursk is "convincing testimony to the possibility of skillful resistance to an offensive, given the presence of diverse and sufficient forces and antitank defenses, and sound organization and timely and conscious renunciation of an offensive."<sup>31</sup>

The implication of the Battle of Kursk for the present-day situation is that it is possible for the Soviet Union to maintain its security needs through the conduct of exclusively defensive operations. In fact, the authors conclude that nonoffensive defense is the force posture most conducive to strategic stability.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup>A.A. Kokoshin and V.V. Larionov, "The Confrontation of Conventional Forces in the Context of Ensuring Reasonable Sufficiency," *MEMO*, No. 6, June 1988.

<sup>30</sup>Kokoshin and Larionov, "The Confrontation of Conventional Forces in the Context of Ensuring Reasonable Sufficiency."

<sup>31</sup>A.A. Kokoshin and V.V. Larionov, "The Battle of Kursk in Light of Contemporary Defense Doctrine," *MEMO*, No. 8, 1987.

<sup>32</sup>Kokoshin and Larionov, "The Battle of Kursk in Light of Contemporary Defense Doctrine." See also A.A. Kokoshin, "The

**The Military.** Understandably, the professional military have had trouble accepting Gorbachev's statements that reasonable sufficiency presupposes that the Soviet Armed Forces be structured so that they are capable of conducting only defensive actions and operations, and not offensive ones. Some military officers interpret the defensive nature of Soviet military doctrine to mean simply that the Soviet Union will not initiate a war, and continue to discuss the role that offensive operations will play if the Soviet Union should be attacked. Colonel G. L. Likhachev wrote that "Soviet military doctrine ... is thoroughly defensive in nature. This means that we will not begin military operations if we are not subjected to armed attack. If the imperialists start a war, we will react from the very onset to repulse the attack of the aggressor, and only after this will transition to a possible offensive."<sup>12</sup>

General Gromov has also paid lip service to the idea of nonoffensive defense, stating in a report that "proceeding from the principle of sufficiency, the Warsaw Pact member states propose to reduce, or in certain cases to cancel, the military potentials to such a level where neither of the sides would encourage its defense, and the chances of initiating offensive operations."<sup>13</sup> However, in his book, which was published at about the same time, Gromov strongly defended the idea of "active defense," stating that "it is impossible, however, not to take account with defense war ... Therefore, after the repelling of the attack, land and naval forces must be capable of combating a possible aggression."<sup>14</sup>

Major General Yury's seemingly contradictory statements are indicative of the confusion within the military establishment about nonoffensive defense. For example, General Gareyev stated that "the basic method of

Journal of Military Affairs and Reduction of Armed Forces and International Arms," *Pravda*, No. 1, January 1986.

<sup>12</sup>G. Likhachev, "Foundations of the Modern Defensive Battle," *Voennyy Vestnik*, No. 1, March 1986.

<sup>13</sup>Yuryev, "The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact is the Doctrine of the Defense of Peace and Socialism."

<sup>14</sup>I. T. Yuryev, *Ra strazhu sotsializma i mira (in Guard of Socialism and Peace)* (Moscow, 1987), p. 33.

action of the Soviet Armed Forces for repelling aggression will be defensive operations and combat activities."<sup>36</sup> But he has also written that only by conducting decisive counteroffensive operations is it possible to decisively defeat the enemy.<sup>37</sup> And Generals A.I. Gribkov and V. Karpov have both noted that there is still a certain offensive element present in Soviet defensive doctrine.<sup>38</sup> Colonel Ionin has gone even further, stating that "the total destruction of an opposing enemy grouping cannot be achieved through defensive operations. They can only create favorable conditions for his destruction, again, through the offensive."<sup>39</sup>

### Political versus Military Means

**The Civilians.** Civilian defense analysts have echoed Gorbachev's assertion that Soviet security is best guaranteed through political means, such as arms control negotiations, rather than by a continued military buildup. For example, V.M. Falin has written that maintaining the security of the Soviet Union has become "mostly political, and its military solution is becoming increasingly inappropriate."<sup>40</sup>

V.I. Zhurkin, S.A. Karaganov, and A.V. Kortanov are even more categorical in their support of the primacy of political over military means for ensuring Soviet security. They have said that "by relying exclusively on military-technical means a state inevitably sets its own goals against international security...."<sup>41</sup> Thus, reasonable

<sup>36</sup>"Doctrine of the Prevention of War," press conference of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, KZ, June 23, 1987.

<sup>37</sup>M.A. Gureyev, *Sovetskaya voyennaya nauka* (Soviet Military Science, Moscow, 1987), p. 36.

<sup>38</sup>Interview with A.I. Gribkov, "Doctrine of Maintaining Peace," and interview with V. Karpov, "Top Soviet Officer Meets Helst," *Afterposten* (Oslo), April 27, 1986.

<sup>39</sup>Ionin, "Fundamentals of Modern Defensive Battle."

<sup>40</sup>V.I. Zhurkin, *Zhurnal Voen* (Moscow), No. 45, November 6, 1987. See also Karaganov, "Security Through Disarmament," Trofimenko, "New Concepts of the New War of Deterrence," and Zhurkin, "New Philosophy of International Security."

<sup>41</sup>Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortanov, "The Economic Situation, ystorika i perspektivy razvitiya," p. 10.

and they also agree that the Soviet Union be willing to make "substantial compromises through political means, such as arms control negotiations, to ensure Soviet security."

**The Military.** While acknowledging the importance of political means in guaranteeing security, the military has nonetheless warned that an reliance on political means to the detriment of military means can be dangerous. Lieutenant General V. Serebryannikov cited the lesson of World War II to make this point. He noted that political means taken to avoid war were not combined with sufficient military means, which resulted in "excessive caution in solving the problems of troop mobilization and deployment."<sup>42</sup>

Marshal Akhromeyev emphasized the continued importance of military means when he declared that the Soviet Armed Forces "constitute one of the main factors restraining the aggressive aspirations of reactionary imperialist circles and serve to guarantee international security."<sup>43</sup> General Gerasimov has agreed with this, stating that "as long as a political mechanism of blocking war is lacking, the Soviet Army and Navy must guide themselves by the incontestable truth that the better prepared they are, the less likely it is that the aggressor will start a nuclear conflict."<sup>44</sup>

### Intentions versus Capabilities

**The Civilians.** Soviet civilian defense analysts contend that in order to determine the level of military force required by the concept of reasonable sufficiency, it is necessary to consider the enemy's intentions, not just his capabilities. They note that a realistic assessment of the enemy's real intentions "can be a safeguard against underestimation of the threat ... and against exaggeration of the threat...."<sup>45</sup> Political commentator A.Ye. Bovin seconded the need for a

<sup>42</sup>V. Serebryannikov, "The Correlation of Political and Military Means in the Defense of Socialism," *KPS*, No. 18, September 1987.

<sup>43</sup>S. P. Akhromeyev, "The Great Victory," *KZ*, May 9, 1987.

<sup>44</sup>Lindqvist, *International Affairs* (Moscow).

<sup>45</sup>Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov, "Reasonable Sufficiency--or How to Break the Vicious Circle." See also Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov, "Old and New Challenges to Security."

more careful assessment of the enemy's intention, noting that the traditional Soviet assessment of U.S. intentions might be incorrect.<sup>46</sup>

**The Military.** Military spokesmen have not seemed to be swayed by the civilian defense analysts' arguments in this area, and have continued to attribute aggressive and warlike intentions to the United States. The statement by Commander in Chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces Yu.P. Maksimov that the current world situation remains "explosive through the fault of the most aggressive militarist forces of imperialism"<sup>47</sup> is representative of the military's attitude towards U.S. intentions.

Not only do Soviet military officers ascribe aggressive and warlike intentions to the United States, they also view U.S. military doctrine and capabilities as highly aggressive and offensive. General Gribkov's statement that the NATO concept of Follow-on Forces Attack "is aimed at depriving the Warsaw Pact of the ability to repulse aggression ... and is entirely based on calculated surprise, which cannot be achieved without a first strike"<sup>48</sup> epitomizes this attitude.

<sup>46</sup>A.Ye. Bovin, *Moscow News* (Moscow), No. 45, November 8, 1987.

<sup>47</sup>Speech by Yu.P. Maksimov, Moscow Television Service, November 19, 1987.

<sup>48</sup>Gribkov, "Doctrine of Maintaining Peace."

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Gorbachev's new political thinking on national security issues poses a profound challenge to the Soviet military. He has encouraged civilian intellectuals to actively participate in the formulation of Soviet defense policy, and in doing so has threatened the professional military's monopoly on setting the defense agenda. Yet, it is still too early to predict which of these two groups will take the lead in the formulation of Soviet defense policy. Gorbachev's announcement of unilateral troop reductions reflects the views put forth by many of the civilian defense analysts. On the other hand, if the rumors that Marshal Akhromeyev has become an advisor to Gorbachev on defense matters are true, this may signal the strengthening of the military's role in setting the defense agenda.

The implications of Gorbachev's new political thinking on foreign policy and national security issues hold profound implications for the West. Over the course of the past three years, the Soviet Union's actions, especially in the arms control arena, have proven that political thinking offers the West an unprecedented opportunity to address many of the most important issues facing mankind, including arms control and the arms race, human rights, and environmental issues. As Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations General Assembly demonstrated, the Soviet Union is ready and willing to seize the initiative on many of these issues.